



SAFE House Sun

Summer 2011

Message From The Director

Taken from the June 2011 Issue of Glamour Magazine:

He “threatened me,” “strangled me with a PlayStation cord,” “lunged at me with a pocketknife.” A horror movie? No, real life for far too many young women, an exclusive new Glamour survey reveals. Why is relationship violence still so frighteningly common in 2011? And how can we help?

The answer starts with two simple words: **Tell Somebody.**

The Facts

Very little data exists on the extent of relationship violence among young women. To fill that void, Glamour commissioned an exclusive Harris Interactive random survey of 2,542 women ages 18-35, developed with counsel from the National Resource Center on Domestic Violence (NRC DV), the National Network to End Domestic Violence, the National Domestic Violence Hotline, Casa Esperanza and the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence. “The results show how meaningful it is to have the support of friends, family and coworkers for young women in abusive relationships,” says Kenya Fairley, program manager for the NRC DV. “This is vital information.” Take a look at the findings.

Nearly 60 percent of all young women have experienced abuse. 29% of women surveyed said they’d been in an abusive relationship (62% of those women have been hit, shoved or slapped; 33% choked or strangled; 11% who say their partner is currently abusive predict he “will seriously hurt or kill me”). Another 30% of all women polled said they’d never been in an abusive relationship but then reported experiencing abusive behavior (23% of those women said they’d suffered physical violence, such as being slapped or punched; 94% cited emotional abuse. “Emotional abuse almost always escalated to physical violence,” says Diane Lass, Ph.D., a clinical psychologist at the Family Justice Center in San Diego).

Women often don’t speak up about it. 24% of women in abusive relationships have not told anyone they’re being harmed. Similarly, 37% of women who have known someone in such a relationship never said anything to that person-or to the authorities.

Telling somebody can make a difference. 62% of women who reported they had been in these relationships said that having the support of a friend family member or coworker helped them “get through the relationship safely.”

For more of this edited article, “The Secret That Kills 4 Women A Day”, go to glamour.com/go/tell-somebody



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WHAT'S GOING ON

Save the Date!

...with special musical guests



Lawyers, Guns and Money

**Saturday
October 8, 2011**

For information on tickets please contact
Debbie Brickman at 505-247-4219

S.A.F.E. House's Kitchen Conversion

In an effort to ensure that our kitchen staff has adequate space to perform day-to-day functions such as organizing kitchen supplies, preparing and serving meals, and providing additional seating space for our residents, S.A.F.E House is currently undergoing some much needed remodeling and modernization of its kitchen and dining room area.

The City of Albuquerque has graciously provided the funding for this upgrade.

The Kitchen remodeling is being managed by Buck Duncan Construction, Inc, and overseen by Mark Rea Baker from Baker Architecture + Design. The work is expected to last between four six weeks. In the mean time, Canteen of Central New Mexico is catering meals to our residents during the week while the S.A.F.E. House kitchen staff will continue to provide meals during the weekend. Both the kitchen staff and the residents are excited and looking forward to the upcoming changes.



S.A.F.E. House Thrift Store

Our resale shop accepts donations of all kinds. Donations are used both at the shelter and by R.I.S.E. participants. Items not needed by survivors are sold at the thrift store and all proceeds are used to support our programs and services. Donation pick-ups can also be scheduled for Tuesday mornings and on Fridays. Please call 265-9233 to make arrangements or if you have any questions.

1301 San Mateo N.E.
Between Lomas &
Constitution

Hours of operations:
Monday - Friday
9 am to 4 pm.



CONTRIBUTOR'S CORNER

BAKER ARCHITECTURE+DESIGN

Canteen of Central New Mexico

Buck Duncan Construction, Inc.

Sierra Vista Civitan's Club



Thank You!

GLAMOUR

MAGAZINE

EDITOR AT LARGE, LIZ BRODY, WRITES ABOUT RELATIONSHIP VIOLENCE

Speak Up—It Really Matters

Vanessa Saulter, 37, thanks God every day that she told her friends about the violence her on-again, off-again boyfriend put her through, and that they stuck by her. Longtime pal 32-year-old Janet McKnight may have even saved her life one night.

As Saulter remembers it, that early spring evening started off well enough. She and her boyfriend were hanging out at her apartment, but his mood veered after an argument in which he accused her of cheating. In what became a deranged marathon of violence, he punched and choked Saulter until at one point she looked out the window of her third-story bedroom and—fell? jumped? she's not sure—but somehow found herself, one sneaker on, plunging three stories through the midnight air.

When she came to on the parking lot cement, “he told me, ‘I can leave you here, or I can take you back upstairs,’” says Saulter, now a resident director at Bennett College in Greensboro, North Carolina. “I couldn’t feel my legs. I knew I needed help.” He carried her to her bed but instead of calling 911, continued to torture her for another 12 hours. Sometime the next morning, he hacked off her hair.

Meanwhile, McKnight was trying desperately to reach Saulter; knowing about the violence, she always worried when Saulter didn’t answer her calls immediately. Frantic, she phoned Saulter’s parents and urged them to hurry to the apartment. When McKnight got there herself, she says, “I saw her hair everywhere, holes in the wall, blood. And I was thinking, What *happened* to her?”

Saulter’s family rushed their daughter to the hospital; she had multiple rib fractures, a collapsed lung and “she’d broken her back in two bad places,” says her doctor, Leonard Nelson, M.D. “It takes an unusual amount of force to do that.”

After more than a year, Saulter got back on her feet, both physically and emotionally. “Honestly, I thought I would *never* get to the point where I could leave,” she says, giving full credit to her friends for their support. “They saw the signs from the beginning. They would tell me I would go missing and my picture would end up on a milk carton. Over time, it slowly sank in.”

It *does* sink in, say experts. “If others can continually counter with messages like ‘It’s not you. You didn’t cause this. This is not a normal relationship,’” says Renick, “they can help women escape the abuser’s reality.”

That’s exactly the script Ashia Troiano, 21, a recent Swarthmore College graduate, used with her best friend, Quasona Cobb, also 21. “There were plenty of times where I was like, ‘This isn’t healthy—you’re not even happy,’” she says of Cobb’s relationship with boyfriend Keith Bailey and his ongoing brutality.

Cobb, a hotel administrative assistant and college student in New York, eventually came to the same conclusion herself; last December, she demanded that Bailey move out. Troiano stood by her—and is still her rock through the even darker time that has followed. One night before Bailey left, as Cobb later told police, he pulled out a chunk of her hair and dragged her down the hall; then, planting his foot on her stomach and holding a lighter in one hand, he started dousing her with her own aromatherapy oil. Vanilla, maybe, or grapefruit. She realized, with horror, what he was about to do. “I was screaming. I was begging, ‘Please do not set me on fire. I’ll do anything you want, OK? I’ll stay with you,’” she recalls. He finally calmed down and fell asleep. Immediately, Cobb texted Troiano: *Be here at 7:30 in the morning to help me move out.* Bailey would leave for work by then.

When Troiano arrived, the two threw some clothes in a bag for Cobb and went straight to the 42nd Precinct to file a police report. And then Cobb called her mom, Arlene Gordon, a 42-year-old assistant analyst for Con Edison. Although they talked five times a day, Cobb had never told her mother about Bailey’s rages. Now she did, and they agreed that Cobb shouldn’t see her boyfriend again; instead, Gordon, a fierce mama-bear type, would supervise Bailey as he cleared his belongings out of her daughter’s apartment. Cobb urged her to go with a male relative, but Gordon said no, she could take care of this herself. Cobb called and talked to her mother at the apartment around 4:30. When she phoned again at 5:01, no answer; 5:10, nothing. So Cobb dialed 911. At 7:30 she heard. Cobb says police had found her mother facedown on the bed, set afire—the heat so intense, a garbage bag over her head had melted into her hair. She was alive, but barely. Her head had been crushed by a heavy object, Cobb says. The only thing untouched were her perfectly pedicured red toes.

“That was the hardest night,” says Cobb. “I wanted to die myself. You go through the blame—Why didn’t I go with her?”

cont.

Five months later, Gordon remains in the hospital. At press time, she has said just two words, but two words of a fighting spirit: “I want.” Bailey, for his part, faces 10 counts, including arson and attempted murder of Gordon.

The two friends are still in constant contact. They’re struggling with their guilt, but Cobb reassures Troiano that she’s saved at least one life. “Ashia is my she-ro,” she says. “I tell her every day: ‘You are the best friend in the whole wide world.’”

Here’s What *You* Can Say

Over the five years that Cobb stayed with her boyfriend, Troiano never stopped talking to her about what was going on. But many people—37 percent in *Glamour*’s survey—don’t reach out to a friend or acquaintance if they suspect abuse. It is hard to know what to say, but here are some of the exact phrases that helped 50 survivors we interviewed with the help of the National Family Justice Center Alliance:

“I am afraid for you.” Nicole Van Winkle, 24, heard these words after confiding to an old friend that she worried her boyfriend would hit her if she didn’t return his calls. “She said it wasn’t OK, but she didn’t judge me,” says Van Winkle. “She just listened—and that really helped.”

“You’re not leaving until I take pictures.” A friend said this to Yvonne Coiner, 44, after she spotted Coiner’s bruises one day. The friend gave the photos to a counselor, who told Coiner that she wasn’t safe. “I needed to hear that,” Coiner says, “because when you’re in the abuse, you’re paralyzed.”

“I am proud of you.” After Petra Johansson, 39, filed for divorce from her abusive husband, her friend sent her that text. “I’ll never forget it,” she says, “and during bad times I’d pull it up again, reread it and be able to go on.”

“I’m sorry, but honey, if he’s hit you once, he’ll hit you again.” A friend said this to Jennica Tulao, 25, after noticing her bruises. “I’d told her I wanted to give him another chance,” says Tulao. “That’s when she said the thing about hitting. It was one of the turning points for me.”

“Do you want your kids to go through that?” Ashley Raymer’s dad asked that question when she came back home after a fight with her boyfriend. “I really wanted to be a mom,” says Raymer, 24, “and that stayed with me.”

“I can prosecute a felony DV charge with you alive—or wait until you’re dead and prosecute a felony murder charge.” Reena Becerra, 38, was considering going back to her abuser when the district attorney said this. “It was the wake-up call I needed,” she says. “I thought I was in danger; I just didn’t know how much.”



Many of the survivors we spoke to acknowledged just how tough it is for a friend to step in but said that having a caring, nonjudgmental supporter was nothing short of lifesaving. “Even if it doesn’t happen overnight,” stresses Renick, “the victim will say, ‘You know, someone told me, “That isn’t OK,” and it took me six months, but it planted a seed.’ It helps women begin to think about leaving a relationship.”

And saying something—even an awkward, uncomfortable something—is always better than saying nothing. “So many women think there’s no way out,” says Sue Else, president of the National Network to End Domestic Violence. “If every woman who reads this says something, the ripple effect will be unbelievable.”

As Vanessa Saulter, whose circle of female friends never gave up on her, puts it: “Along with my family and faith, my close friends are 100 percent responsible for the fact that I’m finally free.”

Liz Brody is Glamour’s editor at large. For more resources on how to help, to share your story or to see video accounts from survivors, go to glamour.com/go/tell-somebody.



S.A.F.E. House
P.O. Box 25363
Albuquerque, NM 87125

Phone: (505) 247-4219
Fax: (505) 224-9695
24-Hour Crisis Hotline: 1-800-773-3645

S A F E H O U S E S U N

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